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Country Profile

Botswana



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② Country Profile
Botswana



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PEOPLE

The original inhabitants of Botswana were Bushmen. They now number about 25,000 out of the total population of 819,000. About one-quarter of the Bushmen still follow a nomadic way of life in the Kalahari Desert. The remainder of the Batswana are divided into eight major tribal groups, each of which occupies its own territory under tribal chiefs. They retain communal ownership of their traditional lands.

There are also about 5,000 people of European descent, a small number of Asian descent and a few of mixed racial origin. Despite this small total number, Botswana has one of the highest proportions of whites in the population of any African nation. About 60 per cent of the population adhere to Christianity while most of the remainder follow traditional African religions. Setswana and English are the official languages.

GEOGRAPHY

Botswana, known in colonial times as Bechuanaland, is a completely land-locked nation in southern Africa bordered by South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia. Apart from a few rivers, the country lacks permanent surface water. The Kalahari Desert--a vast expanse of thinly-vegetated sandbelts known as grassland savannah--makes up more than 80 per cent of the country. A small area of the northwest around the Okavango delta has rich tropical vegetation but there are no real forests in Botswana. There are, however, some timber trees in the north near the Chobe River.

The climate is generally sub-tropical. Winter lasts from May to August with warm days and chilly nights. August is usually a windy month when sand sweeps across the country. In summer--September to April--there is irregular rainfall and extremely hot temperatures. Botswana's climate is often compared with that of Arizona.

HISTORY

The first Europeans to arrive in Botswana were missionaries from the London Missionary Society around 1820. By mid-century they had converted many to Christianity. The missionaries were followed by British and Afrikaner merchants who set up trading posts in the interior to barter their manufactured goods for cattle. The early dominance of these European traders

has been blamed for the failure of the Batswana to develop their own commercial sector.

In 1872 the Batswana appealed to the British for protection against the double threat of the Boer and Zulu raiders. In 1895 the southern portion of the country was declared the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland under Queen Victoria.

In 1950 Seretse Khama, one of the major chiefs in Bechuanaland who was to become first president of Botswana, was exiled by the British for marrying a white woman whom he met while studying law in England. The British action of banning him from his homeland for five years was in support of the South African apartheid regime which believed such a prominent inter-racial marriage might undermine its racist policies. Despite being banished, Khama's supporters endorsed his marriage and refused to select another chief to replace him and he returned from exile in 1956 with his wife and child.

In 1960 the country's first constitution was approved and during this period four political parties were formed. The first general election to the new legislative assembly was held in 1965 and was won by Seretse Khama, leader of the Bechuanaland Democratic Party. He became the country's first prime minister, then the first president when it became independent on September 30, 1966. He was also knighted by the Queen that same year. After the death of Sir Seretse Khama in July 1980, he was succeeded as president by the former vice-president, Dr. Q.K.J. Masire.

ECONOMY

Botswana has been labelled one of the 25 least-developed countries by the United Nations. This status is soon expected to change as Botswana continues to develop both its mining and agricultural sectors. Although still heavily dependent upon South Africa for many of its imports, the recent independence of Zimbabwe has given new impetus for creating alternate trading partners.

Botswana's modern sector economy is dominated by its mining industry. In particular, diamond mines at Orapa and Lothlakane provide valuable foreign exchange earnings. In addition, the copper/nickel mine at Selibe/Phikwe produces for export while the colliery at Morupole produces coal for domestic consumption. A new diamond mine at Jwaneng, reputedly the largest in the world, is about to begin production.

Beef has constituted more than 27 per cent of Botswana's exports in the past although in 1980 this dropped to only 9 per cent due to an outbreak of hoof and mouth disease. The disease has since been eradicated and production at the Lobatse abattoir is expected to resume its former production levels soon. Although it is estimated that less than half of all rural households actually own cattle, approximately 70 per cent of the country's farmers earn part of their livelihood from them.

The large majority of the population are still rural-based and depend on agriculture for their survival. Rainfall is often erratic and uneven with a drought cycle of approximately seven years. Staple crops are maize and sorghum, often grown using traditional methods. Efforts are now underway to upgrade these practices.

CANADIAN ASSISTANCE

CIDA assistance to Botswana is concentrated in the transportation, site and services, mineral resources and education sectors. Several Canadian voluntary organizations including the Mennonite Central Committee, CUSO and World University Service of Canada are also active there. These non-governmental organizations are engaged in a wide variety of rural development and employment creation activities.

Among the major completed Canadian projects in Botswana is a large power development in the northeastern part of the country to service the copper mine at Selibe-Phikwe to which Canada contributed the overhead power lines in a combined effort with several other countries and the World Bank.

In the transportation sector, Canada contributed \$5.1 million to the Francistown-Nata section of the Botzam Road which links Botswana's population centres with various markets in Zambia. Norway and Denmark were other donors to this project. Canada has also contributed \$1.6 million to the Central Transport Organization for management and technical personnel, training and maintenance facilities.

In the mining sector, Canada contributed \$4.2 million to a project to assist the Botswana Mines Department with advisers, training awards and technical assistance. Canada has also provided \$2 million towards an aeromagnetic survey of the Kalahari Desert region of the country to ascertain its geological profile.

Since 1966 Canada has provided approximately \$15.9 million in development assistance to Botswana. Current expenditure levels are approximately \$4 million a year.

BILATERAL ASSISTANCE

The main emphasis of CIDA's current bilateral program in Botswana is manpower training, transportation, mineral resources and squatter area upgrading in Gaborone.

Some current projects include:

Mines Department, Phase II - \$3.9 million

This project, scheduled for completion in 1985, is a continuation of CIDA's previous involvement with the Mines Department in the provision of technical assistance and training scholarships. Scholarships in mining engineering are provided at Canadian universities to ensure Batswana are trained to occupy the jobs currently held by expatriates.

Central Transport Organization, Phase II - \$2.9 million

This project, scheduled for completion in 1985, provides technical advisers and infrastructure to increase the efficiency of the maintenance and operations by the Botswana government's vehicle transportation fleet.

Kalahari mineral exploration - \$2.2 million

This project is a follow-up to an earlier aeromagnetic survey. It provides a drilling program to investigate previously identified potential mineral deposits. The project is scheduled for completion in 1982.

Naledi/Broadhurst sites and services - \$4.6 million

This project provides funds for the construction of roads and water services in addition to a loan fund for residents to upgrade the quality or their homes in the squatter areas of Gaborone. The project is scheduled for completion in 1983.

Mission Administered Funds (MAF)

This \$50,000 annual fund for small projects is administered by the Canadian High Commission in Salisbury. The projects, usually initiated by community groups and voluntary organizations, provide economic, technical or social development assistance. Examples of projects funded by this source include: \$11,935 to the Botswana YWCA for typewriters to be used for training purposes; \$5,425 to the Kweneng District Council to support their low-cost tuberculosis hotels; and \$1,163 to the Mogonye Village Development Committee to assist them build houses for teachers.

MULTILATERAL AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

Among the United Nations and other multilateral agencies active in Botswana to which CIDA contributes funds are: the African Development Fund, the World

Bank and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. In addition, CIDA provides support to the Institute of Development Management which has established educational facilities for public servants in Botswana and neighboring Swaziland and Lesotho.

ASSISTANCE FROM CIDA'S SPECIAL PROGRAMS BRANCH

The assistance channels of the Special Programs Branch involve direct participation of Canadians in efforts to promote self-reliance and meet basic human needs in developing countries. Botswana is currently receiving development assistance through the following programs of CIDA's Special Programs Branch:

Non-Governmental Organizations Division (NGO)

CIDA is currently funding 11 projects in Botswana initiated by Canadian voluntary organizations for a total CIDA contribution of \$44,289. The organizations themselves have raised a similar amount in support of their projects. The CIDA-supported projects include a Unitarian Service Committee program at the Old Naledi Primary School, equipment for a program centre and hostel provided for by the YMCA and an integrated agricultural development project supported by the Mennonite Central Committee.

Institutional Cooperation and Development Services Division (ICDS)

CIDA is currently supporting a planning and development mission to Botswana sponsored by the Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Official name	Republic of Botswana
Capital	Gaborone
Area	600,372 sq. km.
Population (1980)	819,000
Population density	1.3 people per sq. km.
Population growth rate (1970-78)	2%
Official languages	Setswana and English
Significant dates	
September 30, 1966	Independence of Botswana is proclaimed with Sir Seretse Khama as first president.
1976	The pula is introduced as the new national currency replacing the South African rand.
July 14, 1980	President Khama dies and is succeeded by vice-president Quett Masire.
Life expectancy at birth (1979)	50.8 years
Infant mortality rate (age 0-1)	97 per 1,000 live births
Daily per capita calorie supply as percentage of requirement (1979)	87%
Percentage of population with access to safe water (1975)	n.a.
Adult literacy rate	n.a.

Currency	Pula
GNP per capita (1979)	U.S. \$720
Inflation rate (1979)	n.a.
Percentage of labor force in:	
agriculture	82%
industry	n.a.
services	n.a.
Main exports	Diamonds, copper-nickel matte
Exports to Canada (1980)	Wool, mohair, diamonds \$ 38,000 Foods and materials for foods \$ 21,000 Inedible end products \$ 6,000 Other \$ 32,000 <u>Total*</u> \$ <u>97,000</u>
Imports from Canada (1980)	Dairy produce, eggs and honey \$ 390,000 Drilling, excavating, mining machinery \$ 224,000 Apparel and apparel accessories \$ 97,000 Other \$ 1,233,000 <u>Total*</u> \$ <u>1,944,000</u>

* Included within this total are the figures for Lesotho and Swaziland.

Note: n.a. indicates information not available.

Sources: **World Development Report 1981**, published by the World Bank.
Atlaseco faits et chiffres 1981/82, published by Le Nouvel Observateur.
Population and Vital Statistics Report, published by the United Nations.
1981 World Population Data Sheet, published by the Population Reference Bureau Inc.
Various publications of the Government of Canada.

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Produced by the Public Affairs Branch
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0G4

Tel.: (819) 997-6100



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